

The Jewish Aspect of the "Movie" Problem

America's United Protest Against the Sex and Criminal Photoplay Has Gone Unheeded. Who and What Controls the Movies?

THERE was once a man named Anthony Comstock who was the enemy of public lewdness. Of course he was never popular. No newspaper ever spoke of him without a jeer. He became the stock joke of his time—and it was not very long ago. He died in 1915. It is very noticeable that the men who mocked his life with banal jesting were non-Jews. It is also worth recording that the men who profited from the commercializing of much of the vice which he fought, were Jews. It was a very familiar triangle—the morally indignant non-Jew fighting against public lechery, and the Jewish instigators of it hiding behind ribald Gentiles and Gentile newspapers.

Well, the fight is still going on. If you will subscribe to a clipping bureau, or if you will look over the press of the country, you will see that the problem of the immoral show has been neither settled nor silenced. In every part of the country it is intensely alive just now. In almost every state there are movie censorship bills pending, with the old "wet" and gambling elements against them, and the awakened part of the decent population in favor of them; always, the Jewish producing firms constituting the silent pressure behind the opposition.

This is a grave fact. Standing alone it would seem to charge a certain Jewish element with intentional gross immorality. But that hardly states the condition. There are two standards in the United States, one ruling very largely in the production of plays, the other reigning, when it does reign, in the general public. One is an Oriental ideal—"If you can't go as far as you like, go as far as you can." It gravitates naturally to the flesh and its exposure, its natural psychic habitat is among the more sensual emotions.

This Oriental view is essentially different from the Anglo-Saxon, the American view. And it knows this. Thus is the opposition to censorship accounted for. It is not that producers of Semitic origin have deliberately set out to be bad according to their own standards, but they know that their whole taste and temper are different from the prevailing standards of the American people; and if censorship were established, there would be danger of American standards being officially recognized, and that is what they would prevent. Many of these producers don't know how filthy their stuff is—it is so natural to them.

A Sex Play Earns \$200,000

SCARCELY an American home has not voiced its complaint against the movies. Perhaps no single method of entertainment has ever received such widespread and unanimous criticism as the movies, for the reason that everywhere their lure and their lasciviousness have been felt. There are good pictures, of course; it were a pity if that much could not be said; we cling to that statement as if it might prove a ladder to lift us above the cesspool which the most popular form of public entertainment has become.

The case has been stated so often that repetition is needless. Responsible men and organizations have made their protests, without results. The moral appeal meets no response in those to whom it is made, because they are able to understand only appeals that touch their material interests. As the matter now stands, the American Public is as helpless against the films as it is against any other exaggerated expression of Jewish power. And the American Public will continue helpless until it receives such an impression of its helplessness as to shock it into protective action.

In a powerful indictment of the movie tendency and the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, Frederick Boyd Stevenson writes in the *Brooklyn Eagle*:

"On the other hand the reels are reeking with filth. They are slimy with sex plays. They are overlapping one another with crime.

"From bad to worse these conditions have been growing. The plea is set up that the motion picture industry is the fourth or fifth in the United States, and we must be careful not to disrupt it. A decent photoplay, it is argued, brings gross returns of, say, \$100,000, while a successful sex play brings from \$250,000 to \$2,500,000."

Dr. James Empringham was recently quoted in the *New York World* as saying: "I attended a meeting of motion picture owners in New York, and I was the only Christian present. The remainder of the company consisted of 500 un-Christian Jews."

Now, there is little wisdom in discouraging against evil in the movies and deliberately closing our eyes to the forces behind the evil.

The method of reform must change. In earlier years, when the United States presented a more gen-

eral Aryan complexion of mind and conscience, it was only necessary to expose the evil to cure it. The evils we suffered from were lapses, they were the fruits of moral inertia or drifting; the sharp word of recall stiffened the moral fiber of the guilty parties and cleared up the untoward condition. That is, evil doers of our own general racial type could be shamed into decency, or at least respectability.

That method is no longer possible. The basic conscience is no longer present to touch. The men now mostly concerned with the production of scenic and dramatic filth are not to be reached that way. They do not believe, in the first place, that it is filth. They cannot understand, in the second place, that they are really pandering to and increasing human depravity. When there does reach their mentalities the force of protest, it strikes them as being very funny; they cannot understand it; they explain it as due to morbidity, jealousy or—as we hear now—anti-Semitism.

Extent of Jewish Movie Control

READER, beware! if you so much as resent the filth of the mass of the movies, you will fall under the judgment of anti-Semitism. The movies are of Jewish production. If you fight filth, the fight carries you straight into the Jewish camp because the majority of the producers are there. And then you are "attacking the Jews."

If the Jews would throw out of their camp the men and methods that so continuously bring shame upon the Jewish name, this fight for decency could be conducted without so much racial reference.

An analysis of the motion picture industry in the United States will show:

That 90 per cent of the production of pictures is in the hands of 10 large concerns located in New York City and Los Angeles.

That each of these has under it a number of complete units, making up the large aggregate of companies seen in photoplays all over the world.

That these parent concerns control the market.

That 85 per cent of these parent concerns are in the hands of Jews.

That they constitute an invincible centralized organization which distributes its products to tens of thousands of exhibitors, the majority of whom are Jews of an inferior type.

That the independent motion pictures have no distributing center but sell in the open market.

It may come as a surprise to many people that there is no dearth of good pictures. The trouble is that there is no means by which good pictures can reach the public. One of the notable libraries of beautiful pictures, containing the cream of dramatic and educational films, has been rendered absolutely useless because of the impossibility of getting them before the public. The owners of these pictures achieved a little advance by engaging Jewish salesmen to push the pictures, but against them has always been the huge and silent force of that concentrated opposition which is apparently against the introduction of decency and delight into the screen world.

Once in a while an independent producer like David Wark Griffith or Charles Ray gives the world a screen production that is not only without offense or propaganda, but is a veritable delight and joy. These pictures, with their attendant success, are the strongest answers that can be made to the cry of some producers that the only profitable plays are the nasty ones.

That cry, of course, is based on fact. Without doubt, as things now go, the nasty pictures are the more profitable, because they are the most elaborately made and the most gorgeously advertised. The very few of them have secured their patronage by advertising that they deal with "moral problems."

"Public Demand" a False Plea

BUT all public taste is cultivated. Every city which can boast of public spirit has citizens who spend tens of thousands of dollars annually in an attempt to create a community taste for good music. They succeed to a certain extent, but very rarely do they make it pay. It appears that the work of demoralizing the public taste is far more profitable. And as our whole range of public entertainment, outside of the higher musical field, has fallen into the hands of groups who do not know what the term "art" means, it is evident how overwhelming the appeal of the dollar must be.

If the public taste is now so fixedly demoralized that the moving picture producers can confidently claim that "the public demands what we are giving it,"

the case is more damning than otherwise. For it is recognized by all detached observers that such a public taste is a most urgent reason why immediate and heroic remedies should be adopted.

Cocaine peddlers can easily establish a "public demand" for their drugs, and they do. But that demand is never considered to be an extenuation for the peddling of "coke." So with the psychic poison and visual filth of the ordinary movie—the demand it has created is morally lawless, and the further satisfaction of the demand is morally lawless too.

Carl Laemmle, one of the leading producers in America and head of the Universal Film Company, testified before a congressional committee that he had sent a circular entitled "What Do You Want?" to the exhibitors who bought his pictures. At that time his company was in communication with about 22,000 exhibitors. Mr. Laemmle says that he expected about 95 per cent of the answers to favor clean, wholesome pictures, but "instead of finding 95 per cent favoring clean pictures, I discovered that at least one-half, or possibly 60 per cent, want pictures to be risqué, the French for smutty."

Laemmle himself is a German-born Jew, and did not state what percentage of the replies were from people of what is euphemistically termed his "faith."

It is a very noticeable fact that whenever any attempt is made to control the tumultuous indecency and triviality which the movies ceaselessly pour out day and night upon the American public, the opposition thereto is Jewish. Take, for example, the attempt to rouse the sober spirit of America to a proper appreciation of what is happening to Sunday, the Day of Rest. The opponents of the whole movement—a movement for the awakening of conscience, not for the passage of laws—are Jews, and they justify their opposition on Jewish grounds.

Whenever the movies are before the bar of public opinion, their defenders as they are, are Jews. In the congressional hearing before referred to, the lawyers who appeared for the companies were all Jews, distinguished by the names Meyers, Ludvigh, Kolm, Friend and Rosenthal.

There was even a Jewish rabbi involved, who gave a most ingenious explanation both of Jewish control of the movies and also of Jewish opposition to control of the character of the movies.

A Rabbi Shows How Easy It Is

"I AM a Jew," he said. "You know as well as I do that we have been the unfortunate victims of the nasty, biting tongue, and you know as well as I do that the movie first held us up to ridicule, and we have not only been disgraced in these movies, but we have had our religion traduced, and disgracefully traduced."

If this is true, it is chargeable to the Jews themselves, for Jews have always controlled the business. That it is true is probable, for the most zealous lampooners of the Jews have been Jewish comedians. Non-Jews fail abjectly in endeavoring to portray the character.

"We felt very much hurt," he continued, "and we felt there was a remedy, and that remedy was public opinion; and what did we do? We did not come to Congress. We organized a society—the Independent Order of B'nai B'rith which is the largest Jewish fraternal order in the world. It organized what is called the anti-defamation league with headquarters in Chicago; and the league for the defense of the Jewish name united with other people—in the Catholic Church, the Truth Society and Holy Name Society—and it wrote to all the movie manufacturers of the country asking them that they do not traduce the Jewish character and the Jewish religion, and that they do not hold us up to ridicule; that we did not object to the depiction of Jewish character, but we did object to the caricature of Jewish character and the caricature of our name and religion; and after thus having explained to the manufacturers our position, we appointed a committee of men in every city in the country, asking them that they appeal to the municipal authorities that they permit not the presentation of pictures that were calculated to offend the Jewish character and the Jewish sensitiveness."

"What has been the result? There has been necessary not a protest, because movies in this country are not producing that class of movies any longer."

Of course! there are excellent reasons why the Jewish protests, if any really were necessary, should be instantly obeyed.

But why has not the continued and clamorous protest of decent America been equally heeded? Why